

## TRAVELORE

By Earl Snodgrass

### At 91 she's a teacher and a traveler...

Dr. Doty is shown here with Laurie Sedgwick, winner of the Doty Memorial Award at an ROTC banquet at MSU. Dr. Doty has been a supporter of ROTC for more than 50 years.



"Get interested in something and work at it," advises Dr. Edith Doty, 91, a resident of East Lansing, adding, "Be interested in other people." She's a retired Associate Professor of Spanish at Michigan State University. But she still teaches intermediate and advanced Spanish as a volunteer in the East Lansing Older People's Program at Valley Court Community Center. Those of us who are in one of her classes agree she follows her own advice.

The daughter of an army general, a woman who as a little girl was once held for ransom by pygmies in the Philippines, she says, "I don't think I'm interesting enough to interview."

Dr. Doty learned Spanish before she learned English. She went to Cuba at six weeks of age with her father, then "Captain" Dwight Edward Aultman, and spent the first eight years of her life there. Her father insisted that only Spanish be spoken at home, saying, "You can always pick up English later." The result for her was fluency in both languages.

Her father, a West Pointer, became a general in 1917. He became tenth in rank in the United States Army. Later a ship and a main highway in the state of Indiana would be named after him.

She traveled with her parents around the United States while he served in the artillery. They were

in San Francisco at the time of the great earthquake in 1906. Her father was 34 at the time and she thought of him as a superman. When he came home from fire fighting, his face showing exhaustion, and collapsed on the floor, she was shocked. At night the fires of San Francisco lighted up the sky. As she told story, she gestured and her eyes reflected the horror. "I don't think I've ever been so scared," she said.

As a child of 12 she was at the army fort in the Philippines that later became Clark Field. It was there that she and three other children were "kidnapped" by pygmies. They had been warned repeatedly never to go off the military reservation, but they did and got captured.

It wasn't a frightening experience for her because the pygmies were friendly. Living in jungle areas nearby, they often came on the reservation to sell air plants. The pygmies seldom had any meat and were always happy to have the gift of a dead mule or horse. After capturing the children, the pygmies demanded a ransom of meat. The army happened to have a recently deceased horse and made a swap.

#### SHE LAUGHED AS SHE TOLD OF THE EXPERIENCE

Dr. Doty laughed as she told of how her children tease her about the experience: "Which quarter of the horse were you exchanged for?"

Later she married an army officer, Mark H. Doty. In 1941 when World War II began, her husband and Dwight D. Eisenhower were both colonels when General Hugh Drum, commander of East Coast defense, took the two officers aside and said both of them would be generals within a year.

Unfortunately, Lt. Col. Doty became an invalid soon after as the result of a stroke. Remembering, a look of pain crossed Dr. Doty's face. After they moved to Miami, Edith, because of her proficiency in Spanish, found employment with the office of censorship and became supervisor. Later they moved back to East Lansing, where they owned a home dating from an earlier tour of duty when Col. Doty was assigned to work with ROTC at Michigan State.

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At the age of 56, Edith Doty began studying for her Ph.D. at the University of Michigan and she eventually became associate professor of Spanish at Michigan State University. Her husband died in 1951.

Dr. Doty loves to travel. Although she's been on cruise ships, she prefers freighters. In 1960 she took a sabbatical and traveled around the world by freighter, spending 92 days aboard ship. She liked Japan and, of course she visited the Philippines. Michigan University in Ypsilanti, has inaugurated driving through Germany. She bought a VW and spent a month traveling alone. She knew the language, which had been part of her course of study for her Ph.D. She also spent time driving the highways and byways of France and other parts of Europe.

She loved the people of the Philippines, Dr. Doty said, and she loved the tropical climate. She not only spent time there as the daughter of an army officer, but returned later as the wife of one. Her second tour was 1931-34. Her youngest son was born there. She has three sons, thirteen grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

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Dr. Doty enjoys travel in the United States, especially in New England where she has a summer cottage on a lake near Augusta, Maine. For many years, she's spent each summer there.

"It's peaceful and lovely and I have so many wonderful friends there. I wish I could put my East Lansing friends and my friends there together and enjoy them at the same time."

Dr. Doty may have inherited her spunk and spirit of independence from her mother, Alma Aultman. For many years Alma Aultman was a columnist for The New York Times under the name "Dorothy Stanhope". She entered the University of Oklahoma in 1929. She was 58. It was a daring thing for a woman to do at that time and not everyone at Oklahoma was happy about it.

On a written assignment, a professor gave her a lower grade than she expected, a "B", while a girl student sitting next to her got an "A" though her paper was profusely marked. She went up to ask the professor what she could do to get a better grade, since he had not indicated anything was wrong with her paper. The professor blew up, telling her "go back to your knitting and bridge playing."

When Alma Aultman graduated, the president of the university signed her diploma while Mrs. Aultman looked over his shoulder and photographers from the press recorded the scene. The woman graduate's picture appeared in newspapers across the United States.

Today, as a teacher of older adults, Dr. Doty doesn't like to hear excuses, such as "my memory isn't as good as it was." She jumps on that lame excuse with "you didn't study hard enough". Alas, she won't allow us one of the pleasures of getting older, being able to plead infirmity of body or mind. "When I was younger, I could lift my arm this high." Whoops.

We admire Dr. Edith Doty. She challenges us, compliments us, inspires us, and occasionally gives us a well-deserved verbal rap on the knuckles.

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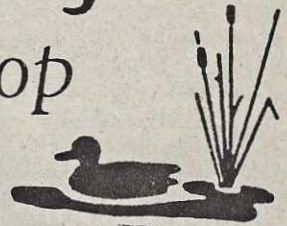
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